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NIE-25

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SKETCH OUTLINE FOR EG PAPER ON USSR INTENTIONS

I. Permanent Factors

The analysis of Soviet intentions must begin with the answers to certain general questions:

A. What is the over-all purpose of the Soviet Union? Is it generally agreed that the Kremlin intends to expand its system over the world by means other than war but without other than a purely pragmatic aversion to war?

B. What is the character of the Soviet drive? At least two points of view exist on this question, and while no exclusive answer may be attainable, a clear, explicit decision on relative weight must be reached between the views that the Kremlin:

(1) has a low "threshold of decision" on actions which in its opinion will bring on war, because it:

(a) has such purposiveness, confidence, and disposition; or

(b) is so impelled by the force of its own propaganda impulse and requirements; or

(c) is so convinced of the relatively short-term inevitability of a war between the Eastern and Western power systems.

(2) does not wish to engage in a general war, but has a natural propensity for bluff, and:

(a) will retreat at any critical point short of the issue of outright national survival. This issue it

(1) will not,

(ii) will, in view of an almost pathological sensitivity to the existence or proximity of external strength lying outside its control,

interpret rather broadly.

(b) will not retreat when this bluff is called, for fear of losing face.

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2.

Among the considerations that have to be examined in determining the character of the Soviet drive are the Soviet leaders' ideological sense of destiny, whether near or remote, and the extent to which they are influenced by their dogma and historical experience, by internal public opinion and political conditions, and by their military advisers (reinforced by the growing weight of military preparedness).

C. What is the Soviet view of the US and the capitalist West (including Germany and Japan)? This question, which has never been properly explored in an intelligence document, requires examination from at least five approaches:

(1) an effort to evaluate the type and validity of information about the West which is available to, and receives most emphasis in, the Kremlin;

(2) an imaginative review of Western actions since 1917, as they must look to the Soviet Union;

(3) an evaluation of the force to the Kremlin of Marxian projections of Western development;

(4) a logical deduction from the above of the Soviet view of Western intentions;

(5) a review of Soviet comment to see what underlying reactions may be revealed which will check the hypothesis suggested under (4).

By balancing these factors, we may reach some approximate estimate of this crucial component of our over-all problem.

II. Variables

Projections must be made to determine for the situation over the next twelve months, for July 1, 1953, and July 1, 1955, approximate answers to these questions:

A. What is the Kremlin's estimate of the prospect for "non-aggressive" expansion into areas now lying on the periphery of its control?

B. What are the political factors bearing on Kremlin intentions?

(1) What are the prospects for Soviet internal security -- now and in time of war?

(2) What are the prospects for continued effective Kremlin control over the orbit (plus China) -- now and in time of war?

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C. What are the economic factors bearing on Kremlin intentions?

(1) What are Soviet capabilities in key economic fields -- now and in time of war?

(2) What are orbit capabilities in key economic fields -- now and in time of war?

(3) What increments to these economic capabilities would be anticipated from the occupation of peripheral areas?

D. What is the state of Soviet and Satellite military preparedness in respect of:

(1) conventional armaments?

(2) unconventional armaments --

(a) A-bomb (which may reach maximum effectiveness for the Soviets under a phasing schedule quite different to that of other arms)?

(b) defense against air attack, both active and passive (e.g., dispersion and stockpiling)?

(The answers to the above military questions will have to come out of existing NIE's.)

E. What is Western strength in the Soviet view? Including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) projection of current Western rearmament;

(2) discounting Western strength in areas the USSR can occupy;

(3) Western scientific development;

(4) Western capabilities against unconventional attack;

(5) political strength in the West.

From these variables a composite picture can be framed, for each of the three dates cited, of the Kremlin's estimate of its capacity to wage (a) a continuing cold war, or (b) a general hot war.

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III. Conclusions

Calculation of variables at given time moments, against the setting of permanent factors, so as to yield answers to the following questions:

A. Will the Kremlin consider it absolutely essential to prevent completion of any or all of the following possible aspects of what it considers to be the Western mobilization program, within the period covered by this estimate:

- (1) the basic US mobilization program;
- (2) the above US mobilization plus the NATO program;
- (3) the US mobilization and NATO program, plus West German rearmament.

B. If so:

(1) how confident is the Kremlin of its ability to prevent such aspects of the Western mobilization as it considers unacceptable by steps (e.g., pressure and subversion tactics) that do not involve either a change in its basic policies or a resort to force? How long is it likely to continue to place primary reliance on such steps as a means of preventing completion of the Western mobilization?

(2) If and when the Kremlin becomes convinced that such steps alone will not prevent the Western mobilization, what changes (if any) in its basic policies or capabilities is it likely to offer to accept in order to induce the West to abandon that mobilization?

(3) If the West is not thus deterred from continuing that mobilization, on which of the three specified dates would the Kremlin be likely to consider that the East-West power ratio rendered a preventive resort to arms most propitious?

C. If the Kremlin does not consider itself bound to prevent the Western mobilization during the period covered by this estimate, would it, during that period, be likely to:

(1) Pursue a policy of waging the cold war with vigor, but without the intention of deliberately initiating a general war? (If so, and if this policy resulted in a crisis from which the Soviet Union could only escape peacefully by backing down and thus suffering some loss of face, would the Kremlin be likely to back down or not?)

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(2) Deliberately initiate a general war, not because it feared Western attack on the Soviet Union, but because it wished decisively to expand the area of Communist influence, and considered that this could not be done by means short of war?

(3) Be prepared, by any of the three dates specified in this estimate, to modify its policies because of the accretion to Western strength resulting from execution of the West's mobilization by that date?

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